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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3748th meeting of the Security Council, held on 7 March 1997 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in the Great Lakes region", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council expresses its grave concern at the deteriorating situation in the Great Lakes region, in particular in eastern Zaire. It underlines the urgent need for a comprehensive and coordinated response by the international community in support of the efforts of the joint United Nations/Organization of African Unity Special Representative for the Great Lakes region to prevent any further escalation of the crisis there.

"The Security Council reiterates, in that respect, its full support for the five-point peace plan for eastern Zaire contained in its resolution 1097 (1997) of 18 February 1997 and welcomes the endorsement of that plan by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at its 65th ordinary session of the Council of Ministers held in Tripoli from 24 to 28 February 1997.

"The Security Council welcomes the declaration of the Government of Zaire of 5 March 1997 (S/1997/197, annex) regarding its acceptance of the United Nations peace plan endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1097 (1997).

"The Security Council calls upon the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo/Zaire to declare publicly their acceptance of resolution 1097 (1997) in all its provisions, in particular an immediate cessation of hostilities, and calls on all parties to implement its provisions without delay.

"The Security Council is concerned about the effect which the continued fighting is having on the refugees and inhabitants of the region and calls upon all parties to allow access by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and humanitarian agencies to refugees and displaced persons and to guarantee the safety of refugees and displaced persons as well as United Nations and humanitarian aid workers. It also takes note with concern of allegations of violations of international

humanitarian law in the conflict zone and welcomes the sending of a United Nations fact finding mission to the area.

"The Security Council reiterates its full support for the joint United Nations/OAU Special Representative for the Great Lakes region and urges all Governments in the region and all the parties concerned to cooperate with him fully. It also urges the parties to the conflict to begin, under his auspices, a dialogue in order to achieve a lasting political settlement.

"The Security Council welcomes all efforts, including those of the Organizations and States of the region, aimed at resolving the crisis, including the initiative of President Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya to convene another regional meeting in Nairobi on 19 March 1997 and the initiative of the OAU to organize a summit of the members of the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution on the Great Lakes region in Lome before the end of March 1997. The Council encourages other facilitators and representatives of the regional organizations, including the European Union and the States concerned, to coordinate closely their efforts with those of the Special Representative.

"The Security Council reaffirms the importance of holding an international conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region under the auspices of the United Nations and the OAU.

"The Security Council expresses its gratitude to the Secretary-General for keeping it informed of developments in the Great Lakes region and requests him to continue to do so on a regular basis.

"The Security Council will remain actively seized of the matter."